

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the Abstract as indicated, strikeout or double bracketed portions deleted, underlined items added, as applicable.

A brine recycling apparatus and process form ~~[[forms]]~~ a part of a water softening system (10). The water softening system (10) has a brine tank (43) for receiving brine solution that has passed through a ~~[[the]]~~ softening tank (19) of the softening system (10) to remove hardness ions adsorbed on ~~[[the]]~~ resin regenerating particles in the softening tank (19). The brine solution in the brine tank (43) is forced through a filter such as a nanofilter (25) that allows a much higher proportion of the brine ions to pass than the hardness ions. The liquid passing through the ~~nanofilter~~ filter (25) is returned to the brine tank (43). The liquid that does not pass through the ~~nanofilter~~ filter (25) may be directed to a drain. A preferred system uses a pump (51) to force the brine solution through the ~~nanofilter~~ filter (25).